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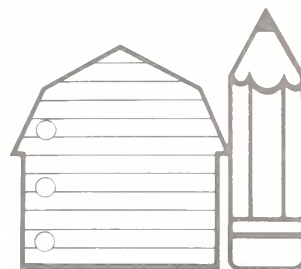
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Ag in the Classroom

Notes

United States
Department of
Agriculture



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A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact: Shirley Traxler, Director, Room 234-W, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. 202/447-5727

1987 Yearbook of Agriculture, *Our American Land*, Most Likely To Succeed!

Like the patchwork pattern of our nation's farmland, the USDA's 1987 Yearbook of Agriculture offers us a rich, balanced resource.

Agriculture specialists, conservationists, historians, and educators are among the 96 authors who helped cultivate the message of *Our American Land*, a 323-page illustrated hardback which discusses all aspects of the ownership and use of the nation's land. The book includes an historical perspective, covering land-use by the early colonists through the impacts on agriculture of recent technology and legislation.

Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Peter C. Myers says *Our American Land* shows the importance of soil and water conservation to the nation's land resource. "The conservation provisions of the 1985 Food Security Act, which tie good conservation to farm programs, are the most important conservation measures in the past half-century."

Yearbook editor William Whyte suggests that teachers can use the information in the book as a supplement to many subjects. "Teachers of history, social studies, environmental studies and economics will find this book applicable. It addresses a credible perspective of American history as it relates to land and what has happened to our land. Current affairs, agriculture and the economy are all

covered in the book."

Chapter titles of *Our American Land* include "Agriculture's Influence on the Constitution," "Land as a Global Resource," "How Land is Used," "Why Do Landowners Conserve Soil?" "The Land is Shaped by Weather and Climate," and "Planning the Future of the Nation's Forests."

In one of the final chapters, "You Make a Difference," Wilson Scaling, Chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service, encourages readers to become more aware of our nation's land by sharpening their senses. "Look at the farmland and ranchland around you. Is it eroding? . . . What shape are your schoolgrounds in? Your parks? Your roadsides? . . . Maybe you've noticed eroding areas near your home. Maybe you've been thinking of forming a nature club for children or inviting some city children to your farm to help them understand how agriculture works." He concludes, "You can do a lot of good. And you will make a difference."

NOTE: Copies of the 1987 yearbook are available for \$9.50 each from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C. 20402. Copies will also be sold at government bookstores in many cities.



USDA's 1987 Yearbook of
Agriculture

Lyng, Mickelson Commend South Dakota Ag In The Classroom

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Richard Lyng and South Dakota Governor George S. Mickelson both signed a proclamation commending South Dakota's Agriculture in the Classroom program. According to State Contact Alan

DenOuden, the proclamation cited the program "for its exceptional efforts to educate children about the state's number one industry."

Mary Duvall, the State Agriculture Department's
continued on page 2

From the Director

Dear Readers,

Plans are already underway to make 1988 a productive year for the Ag in the Classroom program, so be sure to mark your calendars for these upcoming events:

March 3, 4—The New England/New York Ag in the Classroom Consortium will meet in Albany.

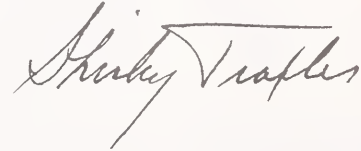
March 10-12—The Western Regional Conference will take place in Boise, Idaho.

June 6, 7—The National Ag in the Classroom

Conference will be in Washington D.C.

I have often found that nothing spreads good ideas faster than these meetings and conferences. I hope all of you plan to attend a local, regional or national Ag in the Classroom function some time this year. It's a great way to share your knowledge and get inspired!

Yours truly,



Shirley Traxler



From left: Larry Nelson, State FFA Advisor; Mary Dunvall, Ag in the Classroom First Vice President; Alan DenOuden, Ag in the Classroom President; Governor George S. Mickelson; Edith Bartels, Ag in the Classroom immediate past president; Henry J. Kisters, State Superintendent of Public Schools.

South Dakota Ag

continued from page 1

special projects coordinator, said the proclamation greatly encourages the group. "Many people have worked hard to get this program up and running in South Dakota. The proclamation and the recognition from both Secretary Lyng and Governor Mickelson lends credibility to what we are doing."

Duvall said South Dakota's group is organized as a non-profit corporation whose members are individuals and organizations with an interest in teaching youth about agriculture. Many ag organizations and commodity groups in the state belong to Ag in the Classroom.

Materials and information have been distributed to every elementary school in the state. Included in

some of these materials is a "treasure chest," in the shape of a barn and full of samples of South Dakota agricultural commodities. Duvall said a curriculum guide is also included for the teachers, with tips on how to incorporate agricultural topics into classes already being taught.

She said additional materials are being developed and tested in cooperation with USDA, South Dakota State University, Northern State College, and the South Dakota Departments of Agriculture and Education. Duvall said the State Education Department and Education Superintendent Henry Kisters are supportive of the program.

"The goal of Ag in the Classroom is to help students acquire enough knowledge to function effectively as agriculturally literate citizens," Duvall said. "We feel we have made a good start in this effort."

Conservation Information Flows For Mississippi Students

USDA Soil Conservation Service Chief Wilson Scaling recently said, "One thing we can do is teach the children. We must help open their eyes—and their minds—to the need to protect our natural resources."

Acting upon these words, Ag in the Classroom volunteers joined Mississippi's Bolivar County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Northwest Mississippi Resources Conservation and Development Area for the state's first "Natural Resources Field Day," an event planned for 5th grade students.

Smokey the Bear, Freddie Fish, and Bippo the Hippo, along with technical friends from 11 conservation agencies, greeted 700 Bolivar County students at the Great River Road State Park, overlooking the Mississippi River at Rosedale. Led by clowns, the students and their teachers proceeded through six study-areas to learn why we need to conserve our natural resources.

The information presented at the study-areas included wildlife and aquatic food chains, how living things depend on soil, historic facts about the Mississippi River, the importance of groundwater, and products that come from trees. The students also enjoyed the chance to pet domestic farm animals and handle frogs, turtles and other aquatic life.

A packet of informational material, supplied by Mississippi Agriculture in the Classroom volunteers, was given to the students to further their understanding of our natural resources.

"Today children are growing into maturity without an awareness of the environment in which they



live," said AITC state contact Helen Jenkins. "Only a small percentage of children in rural Bolivar County live on a working farm. Most do not understand that erosion of our natural resources is something that each and every person pays for."

Jenkins said the objective of the Bolivar County Natural Resources Field day was to create an awareness of natural resources and the need to conserve them. "This early exposure will create more conscientious adults who will be sensitive to the importance of conservation of our natural resources. People in agriculture feel this sensitivity is critical."

Other Mississippi counties are planning to hold similar events next spring.

Students literally get a hands-on experience as they feel the different textures of soil.



Talk about a lesson coming alive! This one did as apprehensive students touched a live snake.

The Next Time You're In Washington, Visit "The Search For Life"

You are standing in the center of a room as the floor beneath you pulsates with light. The ceiling and walls slowly close around you. Images flash off and on in all directions and duplicate themselves and change altogether. It's not an amusement park ride or the result of a Dagwood sandwich eaten too close to bedtime, but a segment of a museum exhibit that allows you to experience the inside of a cell.

"The Search for Life: Genetic Technology in the 20th Century," is a new exhibit at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. It traces the history of molecular biology since its discovery at the turn of the century to the promise it holds for the future in medicine, agriculture, and the environment. Its opening coincides with the Hatch Centennial, a celebration of legislation



A visitor views the man-eating plant, "Audrey II" from the Broadway musical, "The Little Shop of Horrors," part of the Smithsonian Museum of American History's exhibit, "The Search for Life: Genetic Technology in the 20th Century." Photo by the National Museum of American History.

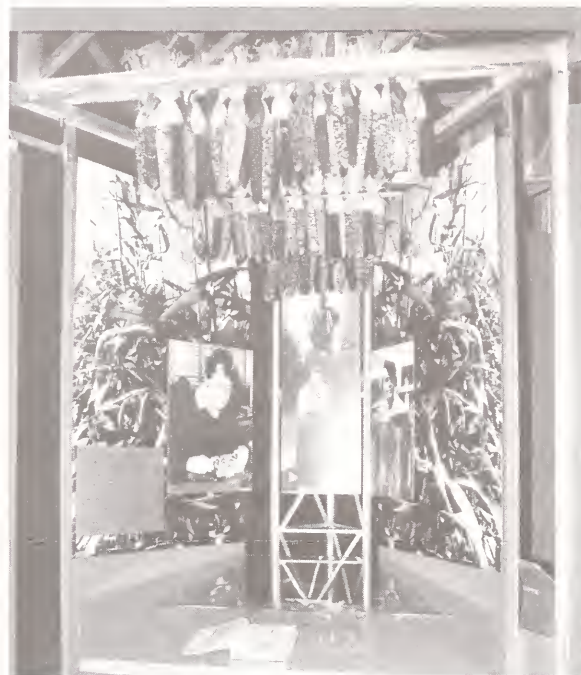
passed in 1887 that established annual funding to support State Agricultural Experiment Stations (see sidebar).

"The exhibition portrays the bursts of scientific productivity and imagination that have brought about a revolution in biology," says museum Director Roger Kennedy. "At the same time, it presents important social, political, economic and ethical questions that are raised by the application of biotechnology."

The voice of a narrator guides visitors through the 3,000 square foot exhibit, where photos, slides, music and models explain genetic technology and the strides scientists have taken in this exciting field. Roses and tobacco plants, both living examples of gene manipulation, are on display, together with some original works by Charles Darwin, and instruments used in biomedical research. While the exhibit focuses on the positive aspects of biotechnology, it also considers some ethical arguments arising from its applications.

"We've gotten very, very positive responses at the exhibit," says Dr. Philmore Bender, associate director of the Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station.

"The Search for Life" was produced and



A segment of the Smithsonian Museum of American History's exhibit, "The Search for Life: Genetic Technology in the 20th Century." Photo by the National Museum of American History.

designed by Peter Wexler, whose other credits include the Star-Spangled Banner exhibit for the Smithsonian. Wexler found the project to be one of the most exciting projects ever worked on.

"The Search for Life" will be at the National History Museum until March, 1988, when it will travel to several locations before returning to the Smithsonian to become a permanent exhibit. "The Search for Life" is funded by a grant from the Kellogg Foundation, and is jointly sponsored by the University of Maryland Foundation.

The Hatch Act Legacy

President Grover Cleveland signed the "Hatch Act" in 1887, and established funding to the State Agricultural Experiment Stations in conjunction with the Land-Grant institutions. The discoveries showcased in "The Search for Life" exhibit at the Smithsonian are prime examples of the Hatch Act's legacy to science and agriculture.

Named for Missouri Congressman William Henry Hatch, the act organized and funded the Agricultural Experiment Stations that were forming in the states in the 1800s. Today, there is an Agricultural Experiment Station in each state, and we see its impact in the crops we grow and the food we eat.

The Hatch Centennial celebrates 100 years of agricultural research.

AG Day: A Main Course For Montana Students

A "Munch Montana Menu" will be the lunchtime fare for Montana students as they celebrate Ag Day 1988 in March.

The Montana State Food Service program joins Ag in the Montana Schools (AMS) to sponsor the noontime treat for grades K-12, just one of the events commemorating the state's salute to agriculture in March.

"The whole point of all this is reaching out and touching," explained Valerie Larson, AMS resource librarian and publicist. According to Larson, many local businesses are contacting AMS to sponsor Ag Day activities.

The State Department of Agriculture and Lehrkind Coca Cola are joining AMS to sponsor an ag bumper sticker slogan contest for grades K-6. The seven grand prize winners will meet the governor in Helena on Ag Day and receive \$50 savings bonds. The winning slogans will be displayed on bumper stickers to be distributed throughout Montana.

AMS is also repeating a poster contest for grades K-6, in response to the success of last year's competition when over 300 entries were received.

"The most important agricultural factor in Montana during its first 100 years of statehood" is the topic of the essay contest for grades 7-12. A five-day agricultural workshop at Montana State University is the prize for 25 lucky winners. The summer workshop will permit students to live on campus and participate in tours and many hands-on activities as they learn more about Montana agriculture. While the prize-winning students are



Some of the winning students touring the agricultural facilities at Montana State University.

enjoying ag workshops on the MSU campus, two continuing education conferences will be provided for teachers.

Opportunities For Teaching About AG Are Everywhere

Reprinted from the Connecticut Ag in the Classroom newsletter.

Morgan U. Himmelstein
Retired Administrator
Hartford Schools

Agriculture—in our state, in our country, and in the world—is not a separate subject in the curriculum. For example, one cannot study the history of our country without learning about agriculture. What would an elementary school science course be like without the study of plants, animals, the earth, the weather and the interaction of all forces of nature?

Education is concerned with living and the continuity of our way of life from generation to generation. Food, shelter and fiber are essential to life. Children need to understand and appreciate where we get our food, shelter and clothing. We are living in a time that spells change for our agricultural resources. We are living in a time when we are losing a million and a half acres of farm land

each year to development. In a period of two years, this amounts to losing land almost the size of Connecticut from the production of food.

Common sense should tell us that good education comes from an expanded curriculum. Skill-emphasis, to the exclusion of knowledge-acquisition, does not provide a balanced education. Good teaching is knowing the opportunities for enriching a child's education. Just think for a moment of your arithmetic text chapter on graphs: you could ask children to plot land-use to show how much agricultural land is lost each year. In social science classes, you could show them how the economics of agriculture is far reaching, for it is a key element in our local and national economy.

The opportunities for teaching about agriculture are everywhere in the curriculum. Keep in mind that even though we have been to the moon and back, here on earth, people the world over depend on some form of agriculture. Agriculture is a dynamic subject. Use it. It will help your children grow in knowledge and in skills.

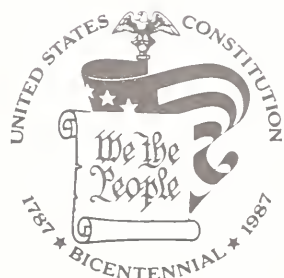


Order Your *Agriculture And The Constitution* Teacher's Kit

To celebrate the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, USDA historians recently compiled feature stories on Agriculture and the Constitution. The information is so unique and interesting that USDA decided to make related lesson plans available for K-12 teachers and students.

Order your complimentary kit through Ag in the Classroom, Room 234-W, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

The story on this page is taken from the *Agriculture and the Constitution* teacher's kit.



America's passion for herbs is as deeply rooted in U.S. history as the Constitution. As framers of that document were crafting our future freedoms in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787, households throughout the 13 new states were growing a variety of herbs for many uses.

At the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., visitors can view a garden devoted to herbs used in the 18th century—one of several groupings which make up the National Herb Garden at the Arboretum.

According to Holly Shimizu, herb garden curator, use of herbs began in Europe after centuries of use in Asia. The custom came to America with the first settlers in the 17th century. Shimizu notes that the Colonial herb garden was not a separate growing area as once believed; rather, herbs were raised as part of the regular family garden.

Asked what the Constitution-era householder did with herbs, Shimizu painted a picture of creativity and thrift. Virtually every herb of the 18th century garden can be found in the herb garden at the National Arboretum, well-marked to explain the multiple uses enjoyed by frugal early Americans.

"Marjoram, thyme, and rosemary were used for meats and stews, while sage seasoned fowl and wild game and was brewed for tea," she said. Herbs were even used as an early sugar substitute.

The earlier settlers had found herbs to be essential. "Early Colonists grew and dried their own herbs because of the great distance from markets," Shimizu said. "Herbs were needed for preservation, and oils were distilled from herbs. Often, herbs were used to cover the odor of rotting (nonetheless consumed) meat. Fragrance also was important to our forebears, and 'strewing herbs' such as tansy, lavender, feverfew, and costmary were strewn about to improve the smell of homes and churches."

Colonial homemakers kept "tussie mussies"—herbal bouquets with origins in England where they were carried by judges to ward off "jail fevers." Rue and southernwood also were considered protection

against plague. English penny royal supposedly was used to thwart lice infestation, while other herbs were used to repel other insects.

Dyes from herbs were very popular, Shimizu said. Madder was used for red, and the madder root can create 50 different shades. Madder was the primary source of red for calico. Indigo grown in the south was brought north and used for shades of blue in many fabrics.

Two hundred years ago, people even crystalized and ate flowers, Shimizu said, with violets, roses, nasturtium, and lavender used for fragrance and jelly. Traders brought imported spices, such as cinnamon, to the new states along with a variety of tropical plants.

Among herbs used for medicinal purposes which have enjoyed a rebirth from the 18th century is feverfew. Shimizu notes that colonists used feverfew for a tea to lower fevers, and also as a sedative. Feverfew today is being retested as a possible fever remedy for today's markets, Shimizu said, since it is believed to be as effective as aspirin with no apparent side effects.

Chinese herbs were also imported and used as medicine, and valerian was popular as a sedative tea. Lungwort was thought to be good for lungs and ginseng, with its shape like a human body, was believed (then and now) to be good for the whole body. Red herbs were considered good for ailments of the blood system, based entirely on the similarity in color. Most effective medicinal herbs were also poisonous, and occasional overdoses undoubtedly caused an early demise.

The Constitution-period fervor for herbs and all their many uses diminished when the Victorian era banished self-sufficiency for a century or so, Shimizu said. Sulfa drugs, physicians, and pharmacies replaced herbal teas, herbalists and homespun cures. And the Victorian penchant for the exotic precluded anything so utilitarian as herb gardens.

Shimizu places the rebirth of herbs in America in the early 1960's, when self-sufficiency and back-to-the-earth endeavors became popular. Consumers who don't grow their own supply now pay premium supermarket dollars for herbal teas, basil, parsley, and far more esoteric herbs. Many serious cooks grow the ingredients on a kitchen windowsill or in a nearby garden.

Shimizu notes that perhaps some current-day Americans are ascribing to the faith in herbs indicated in the colonial saying, "How can a man die who has sage in his garden?"

At the National Arboretum, the extent of herb use of 200 years ago can be witnessed in the hundreds of fragrant, beautiful herbs harking back to the era of our Constitution.

Spotlight

Maxine Ferris Plans to Reach 20,000 Michigan Students

Michigan Ag in the Classroom has its eye on the future. And if everything goes according to plan, the state will have no problem filling ag positions through the next century.

State contact Eddie Moore explains the Michigan strategy. "Governor James J. Blanchard is interested in strengthening the agricultural industry by examining a number of issues. One of the main issues is the preparation of agriculture professionals, starting with kindergarten students through the post-doctoral level. In light of this goal, Michigan Ag in the Classroom recently submitted a proposal to the governor's Task Force on the Revitalization of Agriculture Through Research and Education."

Moore says the proposal discusses various ways to get teachers and students enthusiastic about agriculture. The creation of teacher training sessions and a more structured distribution of agriculture curriculum materials are among the goals outlined in the proposal. "If we're serious about teaching about agriculture, we need to develop a true partnership with educators. That partnership involves helping schools increase the utilization of materials so we can alert children about careers in agriculture," he says.

Thanks to the combined efforts of Michigan Ag in the Classroom, 4-H, the Michigan Farm Bureau and the Hatch Centennial Celebration Committee, children are already discovering the appeal of agriculture with one of the state's newest resources, "Ag Science in a Kid's World."

Maxine Ferris, Manager of Agriculture and Natural Resources Information Services at Michigan State University, and Chair of the Hatch Centennial Committee, helped develop "Ag Science in a Kid's World," a 12-part teaching and learning series for third and fourth grade students.

"We put this kit together for two reasons. First, we're concerned about future recruitment of ag professionals, and second, we want school groups to get a better understanding of the Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) at Michigan State University." She said the kit celebrates the 1887 signing of the Hatch Act and the 1888 establishment of the Michigan AES.

All 12 of the kit's lessons are based on past and present state research projects. "The activities are ag science 'experiences' that can be integrated into the classroom. The lessons teach children about soil, eggs, photosynthesis, and various Michigan commodities. The kit is designed to appeal to kids. It includes a poster, a game board, artwork and even scratch and sniff stickers of our state's

products—cherries, peaches, corn, and blueberries."

Ferris said "Ag Science in a Kid's World" is a great success. "People using the kit have been requesting additional copies. One mother called me and said she wished the kit could be directed to younger kids, and another parent thought it would be a great idea for the high school level!"

Ferris said the goal of the program is to reach at least 20,000 third and fourth graders with the kit. Students will be getting direct instructions from Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom volunteers, and additional students will be reached through 4-H.

Ferris believes the project has been a good experience for all involved. "We all feel a sense of ownership about 'Ag Science in a Kid's World.' It was fun to think about and to execute, and it really broadened the awareness of Ag in the Classroom. I feel good about projects that are joint efforts."

Note: For more information about 'Ag Science in a Kid's World,' please contact Maxine Ferris at Michigan State University, ANR Information Services, 1 Morrill Hall, East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1036. Telephone (517) 355-1758.



Maxine Ferris



AG SCIENCE IN A KID'S WORLD



Included in the *Ag Science In A Kid's World* Kit is a colorful poster displaying some of Michigan's ag products.

Ag in the Classroom — State Contacts

The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

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